



Legislation Text

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Resolution to Advance Healthy Streets in Downtown Ann Arbor to Promote Safe Social Distancing Outdoors

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Whitmer has enacted a series of Executive Orders aimed at safeguarding public safety. These include minimal physical distancing mandates. On May, 4th 2020, Ann Arbor City Council passed [Resolution to Promote Safe Social Distancing Outdoors in Ann Arbor](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fa2gov.legistar.com%2FLegislationDetail.aspx%3FID%3D4548513%26GUID%3DDDD182A75-FA00-4807-8A59-83D12F7F76CE%26Options%3D%26Search%3D%26FullText%3D1&data=02%7C01%7CSHiggins%40a2gov.org%7C4c085a1c3b3c4ec2136708d80d57c35e%7C48afa58563754170b9d1e9c568bb92f3%7C0%7C0%7C637274018038960086&sdata=J%2FaUWyeuwcHHDZ4eF999%2FEpe29xAYHaiBA6Afeneb4s%3D&reserved=0), [which requested staff identify opportunities to use City streets to expand safe social distancing for pedestrians and cyclists based on best practices and work in other cities.](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fa2gov.legistar.com%2FLegislationDetail.aspx%3FID%3D4548513%26GUID%3DDDD182A75-FA00-4807-8A59-83D12F7F76CE%26Options%3D%26Search%3D%26FullText%3D1&data=02%7C01%7CSHiggins%40a2gov.org%7C4c085a1c3b3c4ec2136708d80d57c35e%7C48afa58563754170b9d1e9c568bb92f3%7C0%7C0%7C637274018038960086&sdata=J%2FaUWyeuwcHHDZ4eF999%2FEpe29xAYHaiBA6Afeneb4s%3D&reserved=0)

City Transportation and DDA Staff worked quickly to identify the range of downtown needs based on national guidance and conversations with the downtown area associations and businesses. [The National Association of City Transportation Officials \(NACTO\) Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery 2020-05-26.pdf](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fnacto.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2020%2F06%2FNACTO_Streets-for-Pandemic-Response-and-Recovery_2020-05-26.pdf&data=02%7C01%7CSHiggins%40a2gov.org%7C4c085a1c3b3c4ec2136708d80d57c35e%7C48afa58563754170b9d1e9c568bb92f3%7C0%7C0%7C637274018038960086&sdata=njh6v%2BRFf08OfGnpVg9LclBQ1b8XAPZKGydbaqO13r8%3D&reserved=0) guide compiles best practices from across the country and encourages a range of strategies and street adaptations as pandemic phases and needs change.

Based on these discussions, a set of strategies and programs have been set forward outlining how downtown Ann Arbor streets, sidewalks, and public parking lots can be utilized during this pandemic period to support economic recovery and build a more resilient community, including supporting physical distancing, encouraging patronage of downtown businesses, and reinforcing core values of safety, mobility, equity, and downtown vitality.

Downtown Pilot Project Recommendation:

City Council action on May 4, 2020 (R-20-158) and June 1, 2020 (R-20-194) enables expanded physical distancing and street closures on residential and commercial streets. In alignment with NACTO guidance, staff recommend temporarily widening sidewalks and installing separated bike lanes on important access corridors to accommodate physical distancing and allow safe access to and through downtown (as shown on the attached maps).

The design team reviewed available data to select the recommended corridors with the goal of furthering the City and DDA's commitments to vision zero, carbon neutrality, equity, and access. Analysis included crash data, level of traffic stress, traffic patterns, demographic and vehicle access

data, historic traffic analysis data, and feasibility (see maps starting on page 9). While the DDA District is limited geographically, a City-wide analysis was completed to ensure selected locations would provide meaningful connections and serve as many residents as possible. Within ¼ mile of the DDA District, the pilot projects will provide expanded physical distancing space and strengthen non-motorized connections to Ann Arbor Housing Commission sites, the Farmer's Market, UM Hospital, and each quadrant of the City. City Healthy Street lane closures outside of the DDA District further these connections and benefits.

On June 17, 2020, the Transportation Commission recommended approval of this resolution.

Monitoring:

During this 90-day period, staff will monitor the following:

Safety, effectiveness, & usage:

- Traffic volume (pre- and post)
- Traffic speeds (pre- and post)
- Bicycle counts (usage)
- Traffic operations/flow
- Crash reports (AAPD)
- Direct field operation and adjustments

Benefits, Issues, and Public Feedback:

- Public feedback through engagement tools

In addition to ensuring a safe and effective pilot period, this information will be used to inform long-term DDA capital projects. This approach is similar to the 2017 Fifth Avenue and Detroit Street pilot, which allowed for robust public engagement and analysis to inform a final design that was more effective and community driven.

Implementation:

On June 3rd, 2020 the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board allocated \$60,000 for pilot implementation, including temporary pavement markings, barricades, and intersection changes. With City Council approval, the DDA is prepared to implement and monitor these pilot projects, with close coordination with city transportation staff. Staff will report back to City Council within 90 days, at which time staff may request an extension or remove the pilot based on analysis and community benefit.

Prepared by: Amber Miller, DDA Capital Projects Program Manger

Reviewed by: Susan Pollay, DDA Executive Director

Approved by: Tom Crawford, Interim City Administrator

Whereas, Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Gretchen Whitmer has issued Executive Orders to safeguard public safety including mandating required minimal physical distancing;

Whereas, On May 4th, 2020 Ann Arbor City Council passed Resolution to Promote Safe Social Distancing Outdoors in Ann Arbor (R-20-158), noting that sidewalks, pathways and the public right-of-way should provide an opportunity for safe social distancing for pedestrians, cyclists, and other modes of transportation;

Whereas, R-20-158 directed staff to close residential streets upon request and to identify the feasibility and methods to use part of City streets to expand safe social distancing for pedestrians and cyclists, through shared or dedicated roadways considering best practices and guidance, with public safety and the 6 E's as a priority;

Whereas, The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) has released formal guidance on using streets for pandemic response and recovery, which identifies a range of strategies for neighborhood, downtown, and major streets;

Whereas, Through R-20-158 and R-20-194 (Resolution to Approve Downtown Street Closures for Restaurant and Retail Use During the Time of Mandated Physical Distancing) City Council has facilitated important physical distancing tools, addressing the residential and commercial needs identified in the NACTO guidance;

Whereas, To fully align with the NACTO guidance and the intent of Council Resolution to Promote Safe Social Distancing, staff recommend piloting lane and street reconfigurations to meet the immediate need to create socially distanced walking, biking, and access to and within downtown;

RESOLVED, That City Council approve lane and street reconfigurations on Miller Ave./Catherine St., Division Street, S. Main Street, State St./N. University Ave., Packard Street, as described in the attached Healthy Streets Ann Arbor Map ("the Map"), subject to the specific restrictions and conditions set forth in this resolution;

RESOLVED, That City Council approve the lane and street reconfigurations identified in the Map beginning as early as Friday, June 19, 2020, for a period of 90 days, during which time staff will monitor the pilot for effectiveness, use, issues and benefits, including engaging the community to obtain feedback;

RESOLVED, That City Council grants the City Administrator the authority and flexibility to modify or remove the pilot projects; within this 90-day pilot period;

RESOLVED, City Council directs staff to report back within 90 days on the results of the monitoring, at which time staff may recommend pilot removal or request continuation depending on the results of monitoring and identified need.

Sponsored by: Mayor Taylor and Councilmember Nelson